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Definition of: [runtime engine](#)

[Software](#) that certain applications depend on to run in the computer. The runtime engine must be running in the [computer](#) in order for the application to execute. It provides common routines and functions that the applications require, and it typically converts the program, which is in an interim, intermediate language, into machine language.

One might call an operating system a runtime engine because it is always required. Indeed, it "is" the essential runtime engine. However, an operating system is not classified as a runtime engine, but it would fall into the "runtime environment" category (see [runtime environment](#)).

#### Runtime Examples

Java programs require the Java [Virtual Machine](#) runtime engine in order to run (see [Java](#)). The same goes for Visual Basic programs, which cannot be executed natively in the computer. They need the runtime module that converts the Visual Basic code into the machine language of the computer. In a Windows PC, the actual VB runtime module is named VBRUNxxx.DLL, where xxx is the version number (300, 400, 500, etc.).

Microsoft's .NET platform uses the Common Language Runtime (CLR) engine to compile .NET [applications](#) into machine language before executing them (see [CLR](#)). Adobe's AIR runtime engine lets applications run without the browser (see [Adobe AIR](#)). See [runtime library](#), [runtime version](#) and [runtime environment](#).



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